

Attn: Peer reviewers

Editor-in-Chief
Journal of Forest Research

Thank you very much for agreeing to review a paper submitted to the Journal of Forest Research. Please find below the journal's review policy and other important items.

1. Scope

The Journal of Forest Research publishes original articles, reviews, short communications, and data notes. It covers all aspects of forest research, both basic and applied, with the aim of encouraging international communication between scientists in different fields who share a common interest in forest science.

2. Review policy

The following aspects should be considered when reviewing a paper: relevance of the **field**, **logicality**, **credibility**, **novelty**, **universality**, and **validity**.

Though the Journal of Forest Research is not a “top journal” in the field of forest science, what sets it apart from the others is the extent to which we seek **novelty** and **universality** in the papers we receive for publication. We aim to publish as many excellent research results relating to forests and forest management as possible while ensuring the quality of the paper. To that end, we ask that you conduct a rigorous review based on the following criteria:

- 1) Even if the paper's **novelty** is not high, or if the study is lacking in **universality** (e.g., case studies with somewhat limited applicability), it may still be considered for publication as long as it has some degree of novelty and important suggestions, and its **logicality** and **credibility** are ensured.
- 2) Even if the paper is excellent in terms of **novelty** and **universality**, unless **logicality** and **credibility** are ensured, it will not be considered for publication.

For details on each aspect to be considered during the review, refer to the following:

① **Field: Consistency with the abovementioned scope**

*The editorial board judges this in advance and, if the field is not consistent with the scope, tries not to send out such papers for peer review. However, while reviewing a manuscript if you think the field is inconsistent with the scope, leave a comment to that effect.

② **Logicality: Clear development of the argument, and clear and concise statements**

Since this is the most important aspect in terms of publication of a paper, review it rigorously.

③ **Credibility: Conclusions and so on presented using credible evidence**

In addition to the amount and quality of data, review whether or not the analysis method is appropriate—even if the method is not the most advanced, if minimum logicality is ensured, consider it to an extent; if you require changes to the method or addition of new analysis, try not to overburden

the author(s). When leaving a comment suggesting revision of the analysis method, clearly indicate whether a) it is acceptable as it is but revision is recommended to improve the paper's quality, or b) revision is essential for the paper to be publishable.

④ Novelty: Presenting at least some new findings

Even if the novelty is not high, as long as there is some and new findings have been presented, consider deeming the paper acceptable for publication as much as possible.

⑤ Universality: Application of the conclusions and so on in different locations and at different times, or at least discussing the universality

Even if the universality is judged to be poor, if logicity and credibility are ensured, rather than rejecting the paper on the ground of poor universality, leave comments that would induce the author(s) to describe the limitations of the study, which would make the paper acceptable for publication.

Since this is an international journal, papers published in it should be on topics that would be of interest to international readers and present convincing arguments. However, in many cases, especially in field science papers, the research subject is inevitably restricted to certain regions. Therefore, try to avoid assessing the research contents' universality too harshly solely because the case studies are from a specific area. Also, if the paper has a certain degree of internationality, review it positively for publication even if the case studies are domestic. Conversely, even if the case studies are important, be rigorous in your evaluation whether the research contents are of interest to international readers in the relevant field, and whether this is well described based on a thorough review including international literature.

⑥ Validity: Whether the contents would contribute to the development of forest and forestry research, or forest management

Like ⑤ above, when you review a paper, be aware that the scope of validity may be limited due to the nature of the field.

3. Other points of note

- 1) Indicate whether your comments are general comments or specific revision comments.
- 2) Indicate all required revisions and other comments in the first round itself. If you deem the paper not worthy of being published even if it is rewritten, please decide on rejection at the outset.
- 3) The final decision will be made based on the opinions of all peer reviewers and the editor-in-charge. Therefore, leave the paper's acceptance or rejection to the committee. Also, even if you recommend rejection, the editor-in-charge's decision may result in the paper being revised and reviewed again. In this case, you may be asked to review the revised manuscript.
- 4) The English will ultimately be proofread by an expert, but if the language in the manuscript is so inadequate that it is difficult to review it, please send it back to us as is.
- 5) For Japanese reviewers: Write your comments in English—even if all the authors are Japanese, other peer reviewers or the editor-in-charge may not understand Japanese.